

## Lessons Learned Record of Interview

<b>Project Title:</b>					
LL-01					
<b>Interview Code:</b>					
LL-01					
<b>Date/Time:</b>					
February 10, 2015; 11:00-11:45am					
<b>Location:</b>					
Washington, DC					
<b>SIGAR Attendees:</b>					
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<b>Non- attribution Basis:</b>	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Recorded:</b>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Recording File Record Number:</b> n/a					
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N/A					
<b>Key Topics:</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NATO SCR History</li> <li>• Mission and Objectives</li> <li>• Field-DC Communication and Coordination</li> </ul>					

### NATO SCR History

(b)(6), (b)(7)(C)

They were active in the transition in 2020 through the end of ISAF transition to ANSF lead province by province. They also took the lead of management of the PRT process, but this was complex because nations, not NATO, ran PRTs. But they were successful in coordinating the closing of PRTs with countries.

Ghani worked closely with the SCRs; he was a team unto himself. From 2011-2013 I was there; interesting times. There was a focus on corruption and narcotics.

### Mission and Objectives

We're still confused in month two of Resolute Support. What were we actually doing in that country? We went in after 9-11 to defeat Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, but the mission became blurred. The Taliban are bi-national (Afghanistan/Pakistan) with roots in rural, conservative Afghanistan. They are entirely different from the Al Qaeda threat.

Also blurred were our objectives: what are our objectives? Nation building? Women's rights? In the later Allen years, there was a small ceremony around the flag of the yellow building to commemorate coalition deaths, stating each name lost that day. Then an Afghan soldier would give

## Lessons Learned Record of Interview

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the number of deaths of ANSF – there were too many to name. We're in a weird position with Karzai saying, "Get out," and Ghani wanting us to stay forever. According to Obama, 2015 is another year of transition; 2016 we are out of Afghanistan. The question remains: what are we doing under resolute support? Still an Al Qaeda/CT mission? Or are we helping ANSF in a local war against the Taliban? This is mushy, and the aspect of building infrastructure (dams, hydroelectric power, etc.) is all over the map in what we've been doing. It was never fully clear in our own minds what the established goals and timelines were.

In 2011, Allen was in command followed by Dunford in 2013. During my first year, I was sitting next to H.R. McMaster (Shafafiyat), who focused heavily on anti-corruption and counternarcotics from 2011-2012. Under Dunford, it was hard to remember we discussed these more expansive aspects; as manpower, resources, successes diminished, these aspects started to disappear. They made some progress though. The Brits, especially, targeted kingpins of narcotics and crime during this time. But now, narcotics production has risen as high as ever.

### Field-DC Communication and Coordination

(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) I was only peripherally aware of communication and coordination between the Embassy and DC. This trickles down from the strange fact that the most powerful person in the city was dual-hatted (ISAF and USFOR-A). This was confusing, and frankly even (b)(6), (b)(7)(C), who was British and very well respected, admitted he was second fiddle to the US political and military effort.

Allen used to say that the coalition is the center of gravity of the campaign (Dunford never would have said this). Maybe because Allen thought the coalition of 50 was important and needed to be nurtured. Dunford was a little less concerned about the coalition because the mission was on ramp-down at that point, especially the coalition members. Italy and Germany held and continued to hold the North and West. They didn't fight a lot, but they held Heart and Mazar well. Germany did economic aid in the field in a much more sophisticated way than the US, even in insecure areas. The most critically important allies were the Australians, Norwegians, New Zealanders. Georgia was very helpful, too, mostly because they're dying to get into NATO. For Dunford, it was an American war. For Allen, it was a coalition of the 50.

In dealing with the US interagency process, I liked Lute very much, but he was a very controversial figure. Lute was the big buy in the White House for Afghanistan. (b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)

Relationships between both SCRs and Crocker/Cunningham were not great. Outreach went from SCR to the Ambassador, not Ambassador to SCR. But this is the same with how we treat our allies! It mirrors it. We're bossy.

A lack of partnership created stove piping rather than coordination between the U.S. and the alliance effort. SCR had trouble getting the embassy to play PRT coordination games because the embassy was arrogant; they wanted to do PRTs (or our half) our way. Getting the Ambassador to play with others was tough.

Allen and Dunford were very good at seeing all foreign leaders who visited Afghanistan; Prime Ministers would always hear directly from the Commander. I think it is a question of personality and timing in the campaign regarding why Dunford was not as interested or keyed into the coalition.

## Lessons Learned Record of Interview

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It was very helpful to get Lute's direct view from the White House because we didn't get it from the Ambassadors. The White House view was essential. The SCR was institutionally linked to NATO-Brussels, particularly to the Secretary General. (b)(6), (b)(7)(C) would send a letter each month to the Secretary General of NATO regarding what's going on on the ground; it's much more fulsome if there's a clear view of what's going on in DC and the White House.

When Clinton/Obama came in, they had Holbrooke, Mitchell, etc. and people wanted to know what are Assistant Secretaries supposed to do? FSOs though, "Oh no, not another envoy/political appointee."

Regionally, there are fissures between India and Pakistan (PACCOM/CENTCOM). If something were to happen, Modi would certainly respond. JCS – there's now a Deputy Director within the J5. No one knows what the strategy globally should be, but we know we need one. In terms of national security strategy, we need strategic patience. All three and four stars are 100 percent wary about the use of military force; COIN strategy and Petraeus-like ebullience is laughed at. Dempsy is not for boots on the ground. In 2015, what are our abilities to affect things in the world absent massive military force?

*People to touch base with:*

(b)(3), (b)(6), (b)(7)(C)

